United Nations S/2018/745

Security Council

Distr.: General
30 July 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 27 July 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the fifty-eighth monthly report of the Director General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) (see annex). The report covers the period from 23 June to 23 July 2018.

I welcome the confirmation by the Director General that the OPCW Technical Secretariat has now verified the destruction of all 27 chemical weapons production facilities declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. The long-awaited completion of this task constitutes an important step towards the full implementation of resolution 2118 (2013).

With regard to the declaration and further submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic, I note that, on 10 July 2018, the OPCW Technical Secretariat received a note verbale from the Syrian Arab Republic. The note contained responses to the non-exhaustive list of questions attached to a letter dated 10 April 2018 from the Director General regarding the outstanding issues related to the chemical weapons declaration by the Syrian Arab Republic. I further note that those responses are being analysed by the Declaration Assessment Team of OPCW.

I take this opportunity to reiterate the need for all the open issues related to the declaration by the Syrian Arab Republic to be closed. I note with continuing regret that OPCW remains unable to resolve all identified gaps, inconsistencies or discrepancies. I strongly encourage the Syrian Arab Republic to extend its full cooperation to OPCW to resolve those issues.

During the most recent reporting period, the OPCW fact-finding mission in the Syrian Arab Republic issued two reports. Those two reports were transmitted to you by my letter of 23 July 2018 and circulated to the Security Council as document S/2018/732.

I take note of the reference by the Director General to the decision taken on 27 June 2018 by the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, at its fourth special session. In particular, I note the decision, inter alia, that the OPCW Technical Secretariat shall put in place arrangements to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic and that the Director General is to provide to the Secretary-General a separate report on the initial implementation of that decision, within 30 days of its adoption.

Please recycle

Once again, I must reiterate that the use of chemical weapons, by any party to the conflict, is without justification and is wholly unacceptable. Such profound violations of international law cannot continue to go unaddressed and unresolved, and those responsible for these acts must be held to account.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

Annex

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled "Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme", prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of OPCW Executive Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 and United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Security Council (see enclosure). My report covers the period from 23 June 2018 to 23 July 2018 and also covers the reporting requirements of Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

(*Signed*) Ahmet **Üzümcü**

Enclosure

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

Note by the Director-General

Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme

Background

1. In accordance with subparagraph 2(f) of the decision by the Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council") at its Thirty-Third Meeting (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013), the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") is to report to the Council on a monthly basis regarding the implementation of that decision. In accordance with paragraph 12 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the report by the Secretariat is also to be submitted to the Security Council through the Secretary-General.

2. The Council, at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities" (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013). In paragraph 22 of that decision, the Council decided that the Secretariat should report on its implementation "in conjunction with its reporting required by subparagraph 2(f) of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1".

3. The Council, at its Forty-Eighth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria" (EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015) noting the Director-General's intent to include reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria (FFM), along with information on the Council's discussion thereof, as part of the monthly reporting pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). Similarly, the Council, at its Eighty-First Session, adopted a decision entitled "Report by the Director-General Regarding the Declaration and Related Submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-81/DEC.4, dated 23 March 2016), noting the Director-General's intent to provide information on the implementation of that decision.

4. The Council, at its Eighty-Third Session, adopted a decision entitled "OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism Reports on Chemical Weapons Use in the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-83/DEC.5, dated 11 November 2016). In subparagraph 12(a) of that decision, the Council decided that the Director-General shall "regularly inform the Council on the implementation of this decision and incorporate information regarding the implementation of this decision into his monthly reporting to the United Nations Security Council, through the United Nations Secretary-General, regarding EC-M-33/DEC.1".

5. This, the fifty-eighth monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions and includes information relevant to the period from 23June 2018 to 23 July 2018.

Progress achieved by the Syrian Arab Republic in meeting the requirements of Executive Council decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1 and EC-M-34/DEC.1

6. Progress by the Syrian Arab Republic is as follows:

(a) The Secretariat has verified the destruction of all 27 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. Destruction of

the final two CWPFs took place on 7 June and 23 June respectively. On 12 July, the Secretariat conducted inspections at both sites and verified that all declared buildings had been razed to ground level and all debris removed.

(b) On 17 July 2018, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its fifty-sixth monthly report (EC-89/P/NAT.1, dated 18 July 2018) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its CWPFs, as required by paragraph 19 of EC-M-34/DEC.1.

Progress in the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons by States Parties hosting destruction activities

7. As stated in previous reports, all of the chemicals declared by the Syrian Arab Republic that were removed from its territory in 2014 have now been destroyed.

Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to Executive Council decisions EC-81/DEC.4 and EC-83/DEC.5

8. During the reporting period, the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) continued its efforts to clarify all outstanding issues regarding the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic in accordance with paragraph 3 of Council decision EC-81/DEC.4 and paragraph 6 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5.

9. In a letter to the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Syrian Arab Republic, Dr Faisal Mekdad, dated 10 April 2018, the Director-General reiterated that unanswered questions remain regarding Syria's chemical weapons declaration and require a response. An updated, non-exhaustive list of questions was attached to the Director-General's letter. On 10 July, the Secretariat received a note verbale from the Syrian Arab Republic with responses to the questions attached to the Director-General's letter that pertain to the chemical weapons-related activities conducted at the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC). The note verbale has been translated and is currently being analysed by the DAT.

10. To update States Parties on the recent work of the DAT, the Director-General issued a Note entitled "Report on the Work of the Declaration Assessment Team" (EC-88/HP/DG.2, dated 28 June 2018). The report concluded that, while the Syrian Arab Republic has remained engaged with the Secretariat in efforts to clarify outstanding issues, the nature and substance of the information that has been provided to the Secretariat do not enable it to resolve all identified gaps, inconsistencies, or discrepancies in the declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic. The report further concludes that there has been an increase in the number of issues with the Syrian Arab Republic's declaration since the DAT began its work, and that the Secretariat therefore remains unable to state that the Syrian Arab Republic has submitted a declaration that can be considered accurate and complete in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter "the Convention") and Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1.

11. As noted by the Director-General in his report "Status of Implementation of Executive Council Decision EC-83/DEC.5 (dated 11 November 2016)" (EC-88/DG.13, dated 14 June 2018), the Secretariat has begun planning the inspections at the sites identified by the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism in its third and fourth reports, in accordance with paragraph 10 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5. The Secretariat also continues to monitor the security situation through the United Nations Department of Safety and Security to identify permissive security conditions for those inspections.

12. With regard to paragraph 11 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the Director-General in the aforementioned report provided information on the status of the

Secretariat's two rounds of inspections that were conducted at each of the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the SSRC in 2017 and, also as previously reported, noted that the results of the analysis of samples taken during those inspections did not indicate the presence of scheduled chemicals, and that the inspection teams did not observe any activities inconsistent with obligations under the Convention. The Director-General also noted that, as each of these facilities are to be inspected twice per year in accordance with paragraph 11 of EC-83/DEC.5, two rounds of inspections are due in 2018.

Other activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic

13. The United Nations Office for Project Services continues to provide support to the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic in accordance with the Tripartite Agreement.

14. As at the cut-off date of this report, one OPCW staff member was deployed as part of the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Supplementary resources

15. As previously reported, the Trust Fund for Syria Missions was established in November 2015 to support the OPCW FFM and other remaining activities, such as those of the DAT. As at the cut-off date of this report, total contributions to this fund stood at EUR 17.1 million. Contribution agreements had been concluded with Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Germany, Monaco, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union.

Activities carried out with respect to the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria

16. Guided by Council decisions EC-M-48/DEC.1 and EC-M-50/DEC.1 (dated 23 November 2015), as well as by United Nations Security Council resolution 2209 (2015), the FFM continues to study all available information relating to the allegations of use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

17. On 2 July, the Secretariat issued a Note entitled "Report of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria Regarding the Incidents in Al-Hamadaniyah on 30 October 2016 and in Karm Al-Tarrab on 13 November 2016" (S/1642/2018, dated 2 July 2018). This report concluded that, on the basis of the information received and analysed, the prevailing narrative of the interviews, and the results of the laboratory analyses, the FFM cannot confidently determine whether or not a specific chemical was used as a weapon in the incidents that took place in the neighbourhood of Al-Hamadaniyah on 30 October 2016 and in the area of Karm al-Tarrab on 13 November 2016. The report further expressed that the FFM is of the view that the persons affected in the reported incidents may, in some instances, have been exposed to some type of non-persistent, irritating substance.

18. The Secretariat subsequently issued a Note entitled "Interim Report of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria Regarding the Incident of Alleged Use of Toxic Chemicals as a Weapon in Douma, Syrian Arab Republic, on 7 April 2018" (S/1645/2018, dated 6 July 2018 and Corr.1, dated 10 July 2018). This interim report stated that various chlorinated organic chemicals, along with residues of explosive, were found in samples collected from Douma by the FFM. The report further states that work by the FFM to establish the significance of these results is ongoing, and that the FFM needs to continue its work to draw final conclusions regarding the alleged incident.

19. The Secretariat briefed States Parties on the recent activities of the FFM during the Council's Eighty-Eighth Session, held from 10 to 12 July 2018.

Decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 of the Conference of the States Parties at its Fourth Special Session

20. The Conference of the States Parties (hereinafter "the Conference") at its Fourth Special Session adopted a decision entitled "Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use" (C-SS-4/DEC.3, dated 27 June 2018). In paragraph 8 of the decision, the Conference encouraged the Director-General to continue to provide regular updates on the FFM's operations, taking into account the need to protect the security and safety of Secretariat personnel.

21. In paragraph 10 of the decision, the Conference decided that the Secretariat shall put in place arrangements to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic by identifying and reporting on all information potentially relevant to the origin of those chemical weapons in those instances in which the FFM in Syria determines or has determined that use or likely use occurred, and cases for which the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism has not issued a report. The Conference further decided, in paragraph 12, that the Secretariat shall preserve and provide information to the investigation mechanism established by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 71/248 (2016), as well as to any relevant investigatory entities established under the auspices of the United Nations.

22. Pursuant to paragraph 24 of the decision, the Director-General will provide a separate report on its initial implementation to all States Parties and to the United Nations Secretary-General within 30 days of the decision, and thereafter a separate report on progress to the Council at each regular session.

Conclusion

23. The main focus of the future activities of the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will be on the activities of the FFM; the implementation of Council decisions EC-83/DEC.5 and EC-81/DEC.4, including declaration-related issues; annual inspections of the underground structures already verified as destroyed; and implementation of Conference decision C-SS-4/DEC.3.